

March 12, 2012

Hon. Ida Chong
Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
Room 323
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8K 1X4

Dear Minister Chong,

Thank you for the opportunity to present my views on governance. It is an important Salt Spring topic so this meeting is very timely. At the outset I would to say that I fully support the governance review presented to you by the two Salt Spring Island Trustees. My presentation will cover three areas:

- My personal background and experience in the municipal environment
- Observations of and challenges of being the Salt Spring CRD Director in the present governance model
- Governance actions taken on Salt Spring since the local election

Personal experience

My municipal experience includes a term as an elected municipal Councillor in the Village of Lions Bay, a community with many similarities to Salt Spring. My responsibilities included overseeing the Public Works Department and the Fire Department on behalf of Council. Public Works responsibilities included water quantity, quality and distribution. My term also was coincident with Bowen Island's move to a municipality within the Islands Trust.

After my term I became the President and General Manager of the North Vancouver Chamber of Commerce for many years. Responsibilities included providing business and tourism services directly to three municipalities as well as involvement in many local and provincial community matters, including the BC Chamber of Commerce Municipal and Property Tax Task Forces.

I feel this experience gives me a good comparison on how municipalities function vs. Salt Spring with its present governance model.

Challenges in the Present Governance Model

There are a number of examples but in your congratulatory letter sent to me dated December 12, 2011 stated: ``Another focus that I look forward to working with local governments on is the provision of clean air and clean water``. Accordingly I will focus on Salt Spring water issues, primarily quality and cost as well as some of the other challenges dealing with other community priorities in the present governance model.

As a vital life source water management on Salt Spring is fraught with complexities and problems. Forty-five percent of water is supplied from groundwater: individual wells, private shared wells and shared wells through CRD commissions. The remainder of the water supply is provided from four lakes through one large private supplier and the CRD and even some residents taking the water untreated out of the lakes. Some of the lake water is experiencing serious quality-and potential health- problems and residents, suppliers and CRD commissions and staff have grave concerns.

Disjointed and some admittedly poorly managed water system upgrade projects have resulted in large cost overruns passed directly on to the subscribers, some of whom are paying over \$200 per month for water with further increases on the horizon. Would a possible new governance model solve all the problems? No but island-wide options for solutions under local staffing ,control and decision making could be more easily explored and implemented : such as overall prioritization of projects, economies of scale through phased and coordinated construction projects, greater use of local labour, innovative cost sharing, island-wide technical solutions and funding models as examples.

Another of your Ministry's focus areas you identified is economic development, a major issue on Salt Spring. Since the loss of the Salt Spring Coffee Company development of new businesses has been very slow. I have been a member of the Salt Spring Community Economic Development Commission (CRD) since its inception in late 2010. During our intensive research phase, we identified opportunities some of which were dependent on rezoning to provide selected new community appropriate industrial land. As land use is a Trust responsibility the Commission had limited ability to even scope out its potential opportunities.

Other community and CRD priorities such as transportation and affordable housing would also benefit from an integrated approach to land use planning and service delivery.

Governance actions on Salt Spring

Trustees Grams and Groves and I are committed to working together regardless of the governance model and are doing so. While not formally directed the Trustees and I communicate regularly on significant community issues and the Local Trust Committee provides a seat for me at their table during the town hall portion of their meeting. We will continue to cooperate for the benefit of the community.

As a more formal step the CRD Board approved a restructuring of support services, which will see additional CRD engineering and coordination services working directly on Salt Spring rather than inefficient and costly travel to SS to provide these services. Effective April 2, 2012 a Senior CRD Manager, Kees Ruurs, presently the Parks and Recreation Manager, will report directly to the Chief Administrative Officer, Kelly Daniels. This appointment will be followed by the hiring of a Senior Civil Engineer to project manage and support water, sewer and other Salt Spring Services and a new Parks and Recreation Manager to replace Mr. Ruurs. Most of this change will be covered by transferring of off-island resources to Salt Spring for efficiencies and effectiveness.

If the results are what is expected we foresee the potential of additional resources transferred to Salt Spring and CRD local service support expanded.

In summary all of us here today are hoping a full governance review will be a reality. The community wants one, all but two candidates out of twelve on Salt Spring were in favour and all six CRD candidates were in favour. Salt Spring Island as the largest non-municipality in the province with a very complicated, cumbersome and sometimes dysfunctional form of government deserves an updated study. It is the only way the community will have the information necessary to make an informed judgment on what should be the appropriate governance model for its future.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Wayne McIntyre

Electoral Area Director, Salt Spring Island
Capital Regional District